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(54) **METHOD AND PORTABLE AID FOR MINDFULNESS MEDITATION**
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G02C 7/10 (2006.01)

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 USPC 351/45, 46, 44, 47, 48, 58, 57, 59, 158
 See application file for complete search history.

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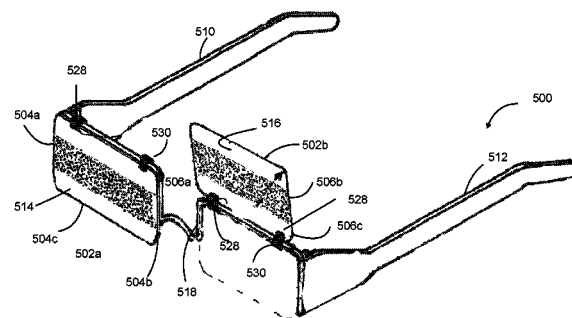
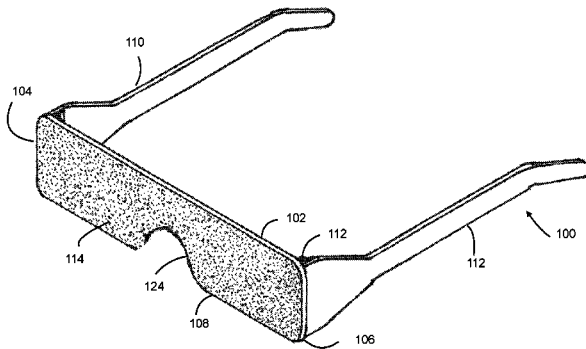
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus is provided to create a focal zone for mindfulness meditation. The apparatus includes a first member extending between a first edge and a second edge, the first member having a translucent portion, a first elongated side member attached adjacent the first edge of the first member, and a second elongated side member attached adjacent the second edge of the first member, the first and second elongated members being generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane.

16 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



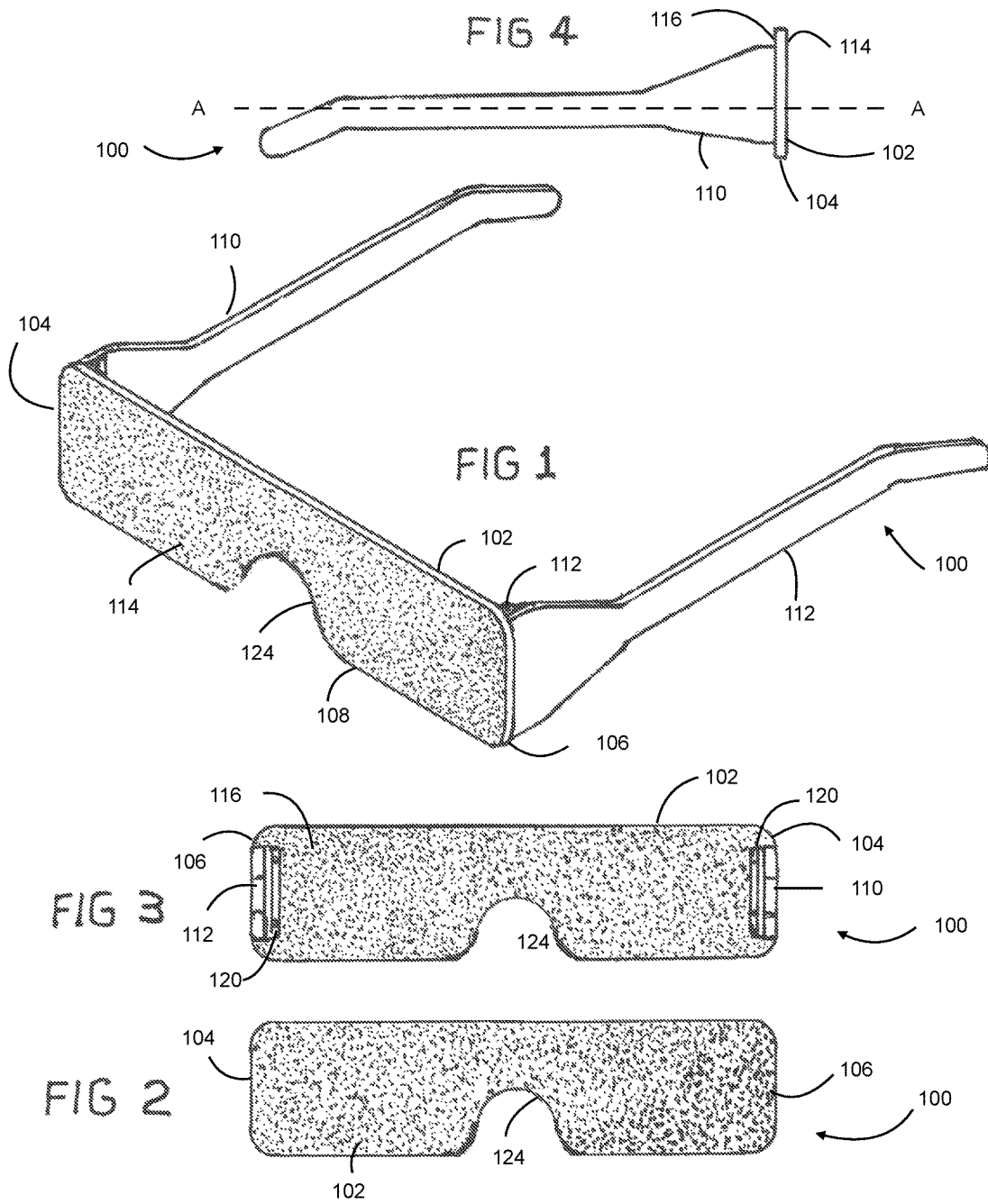
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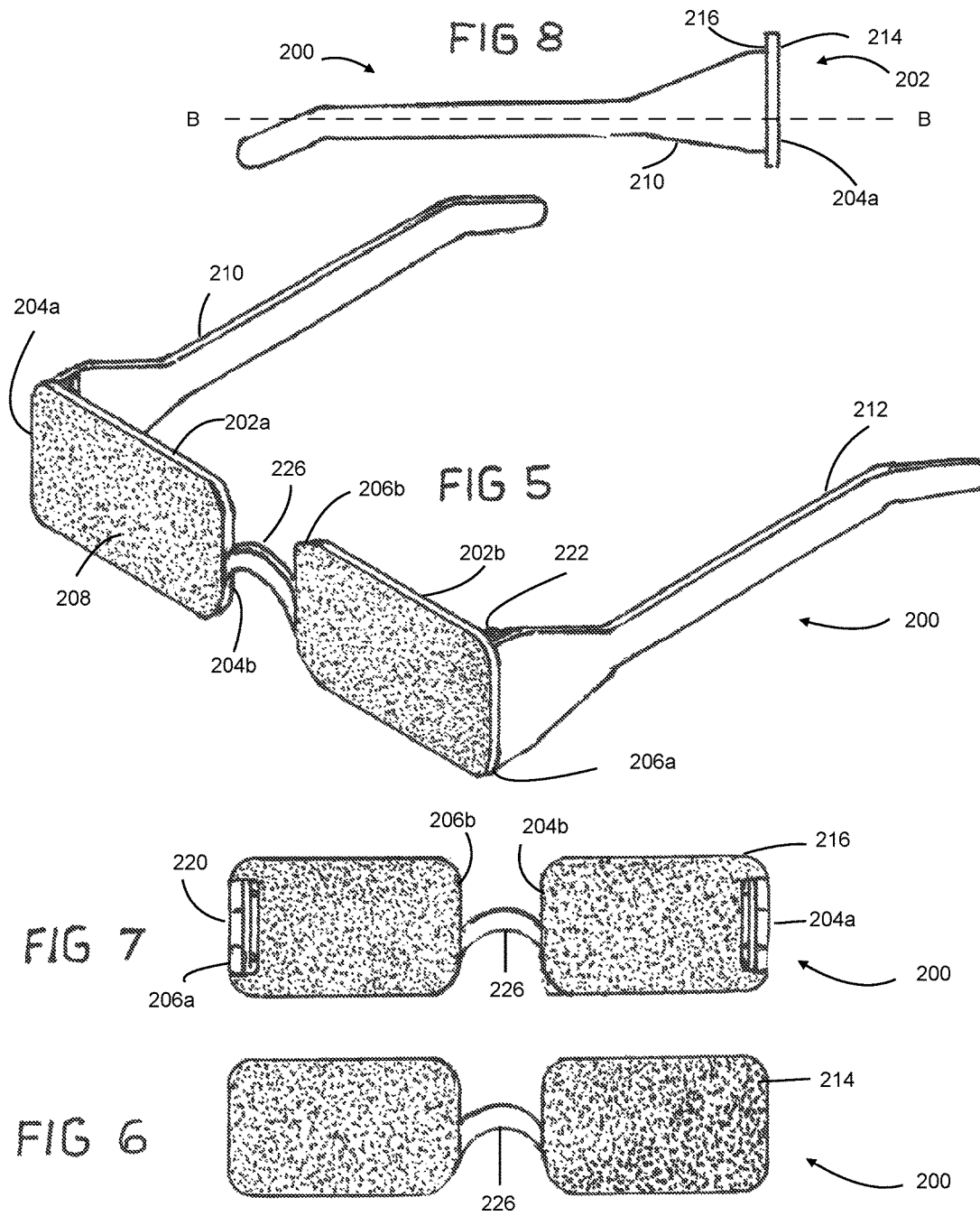
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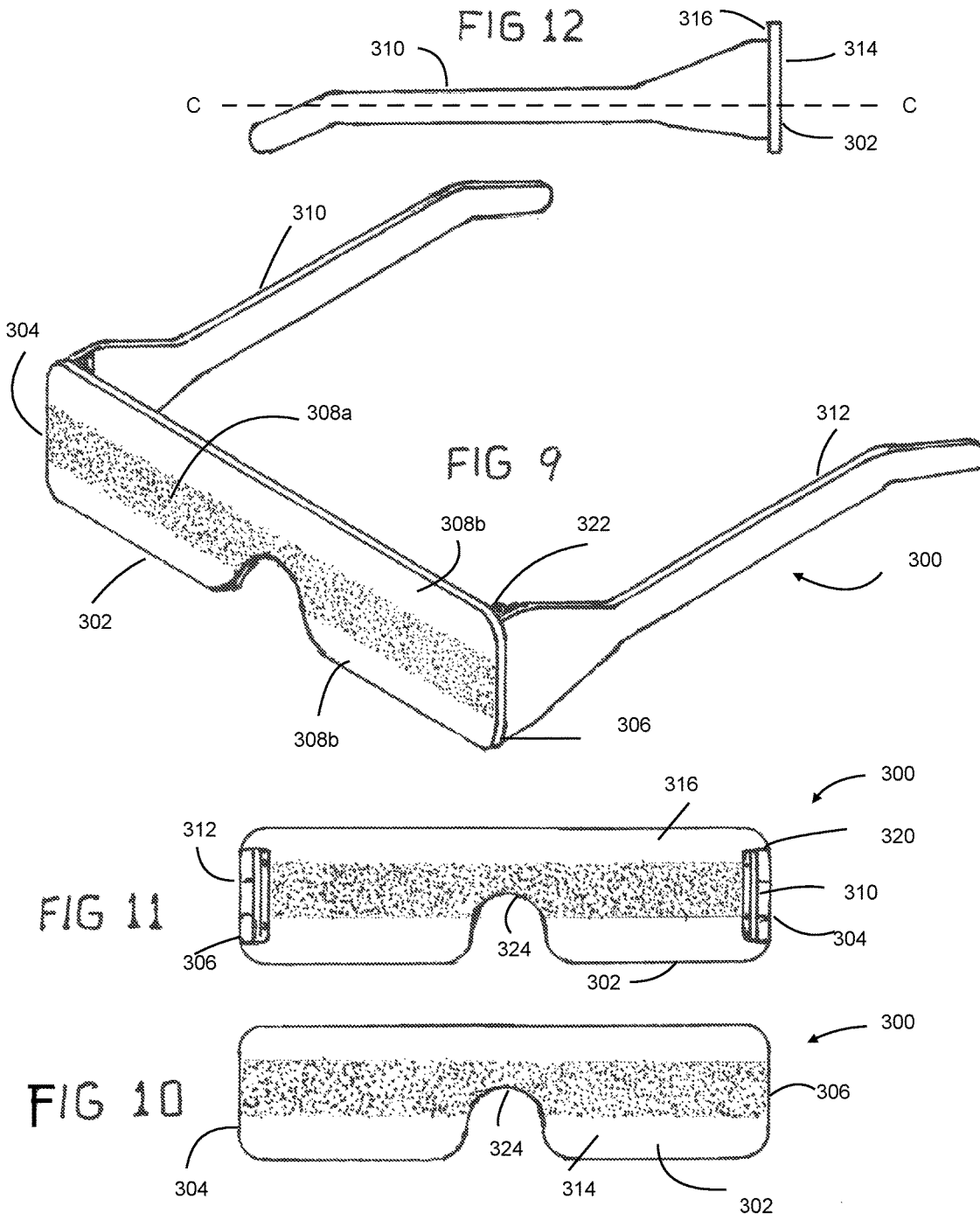
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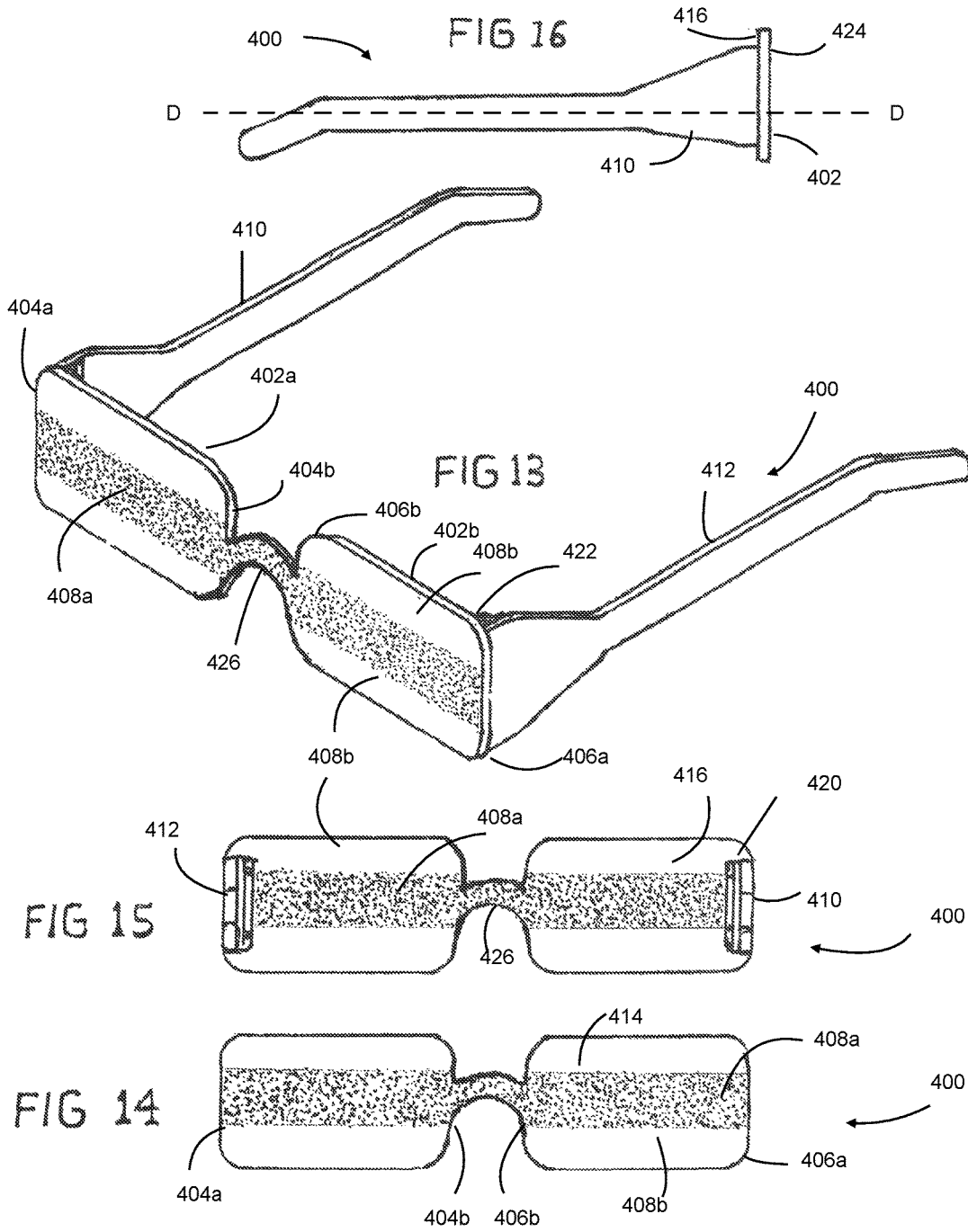
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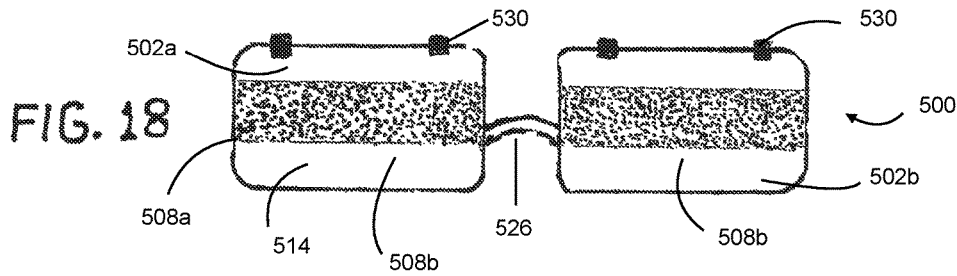
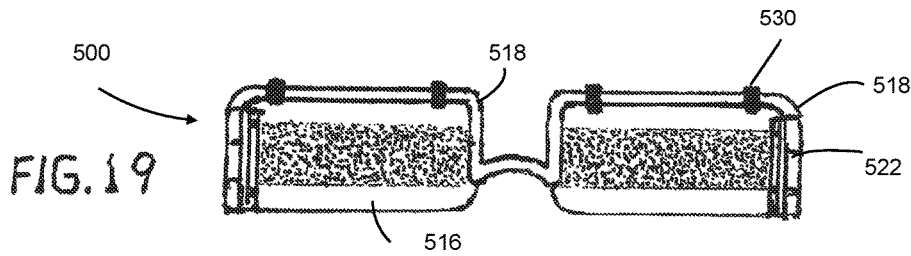
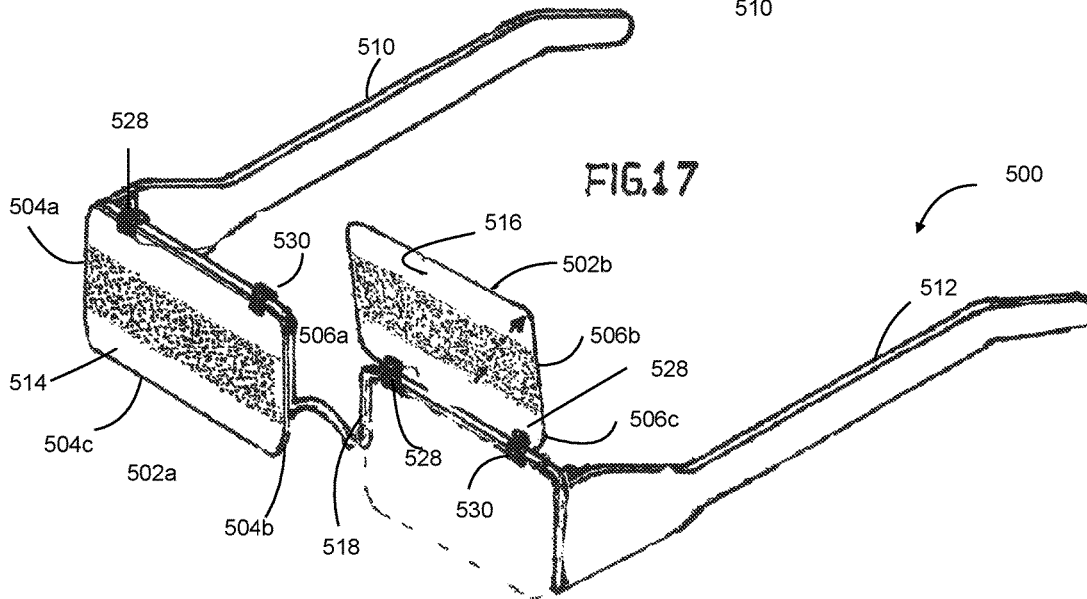
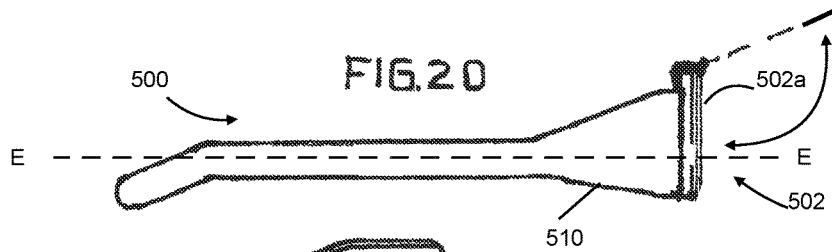


FIG. 21

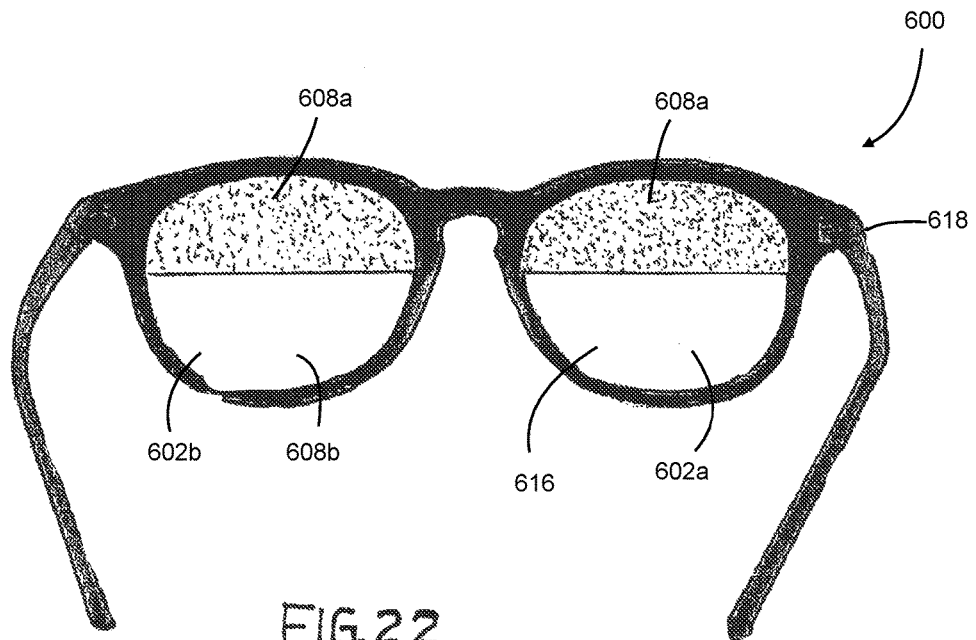
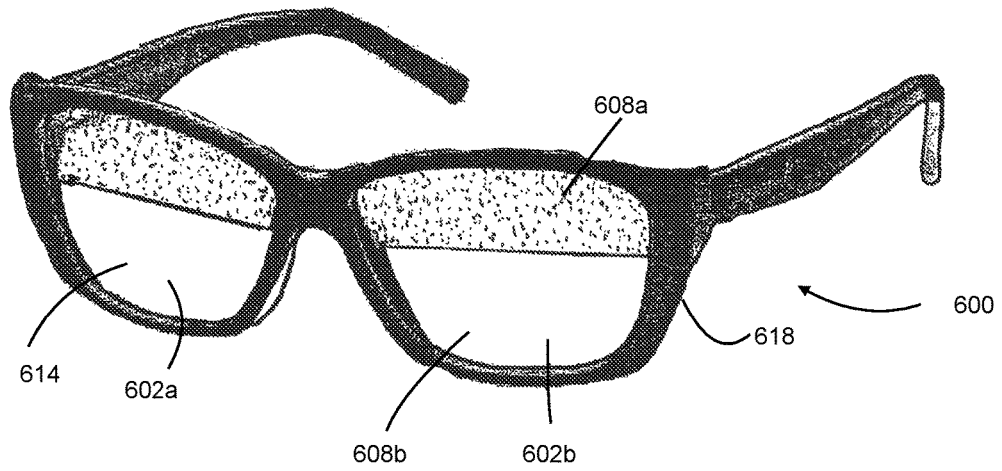
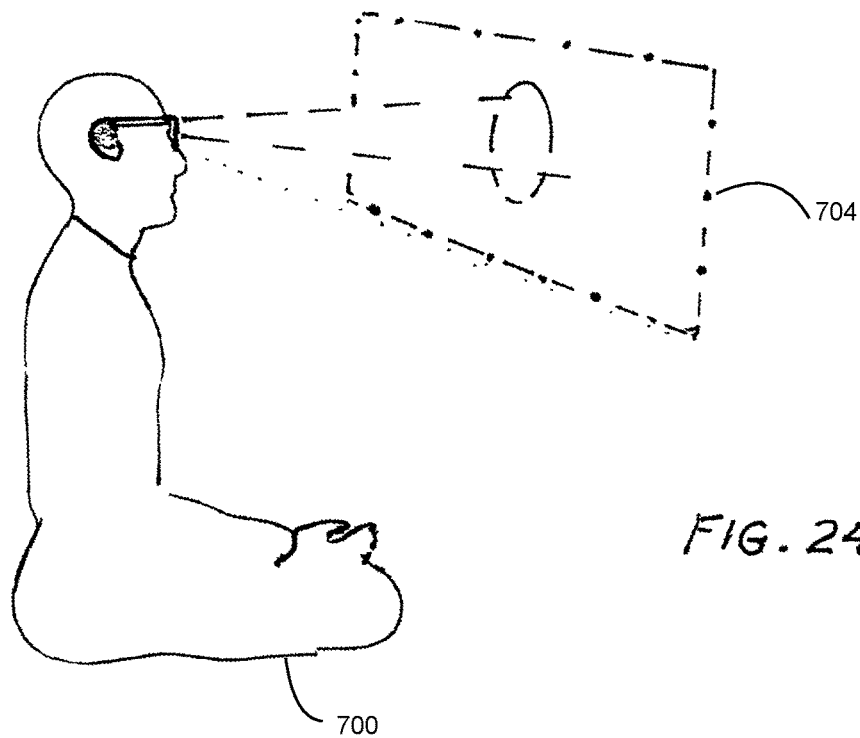
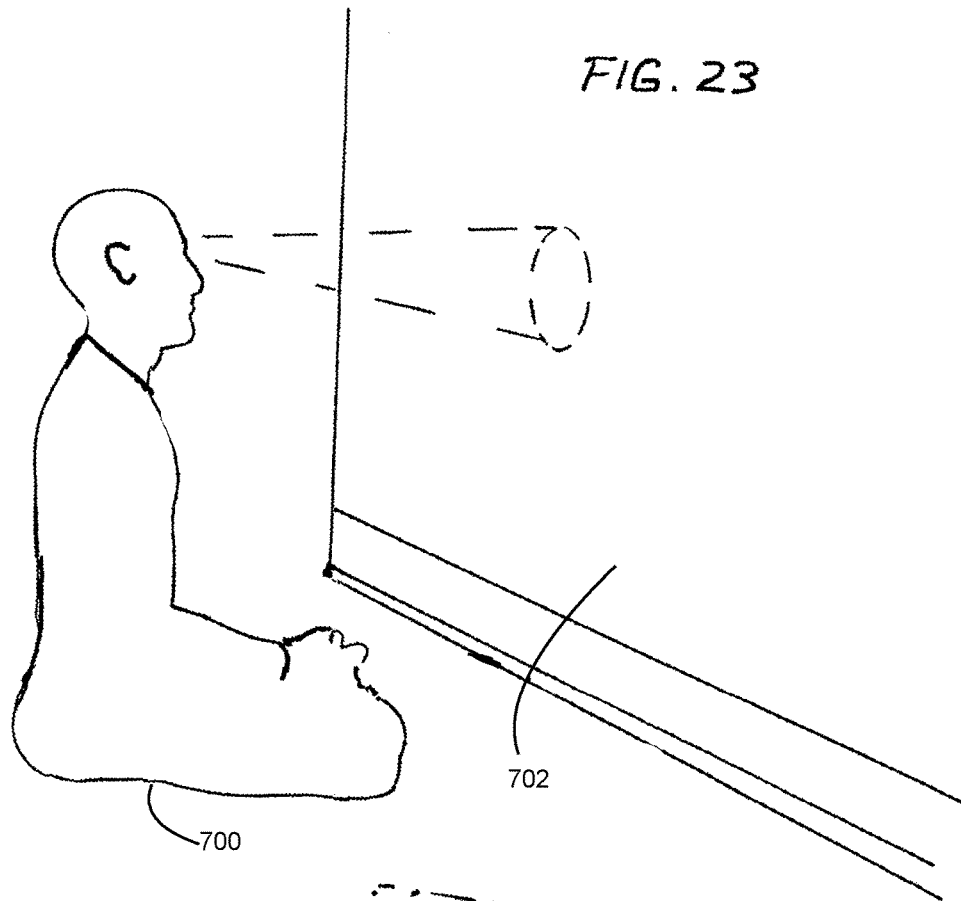


FIG. 22



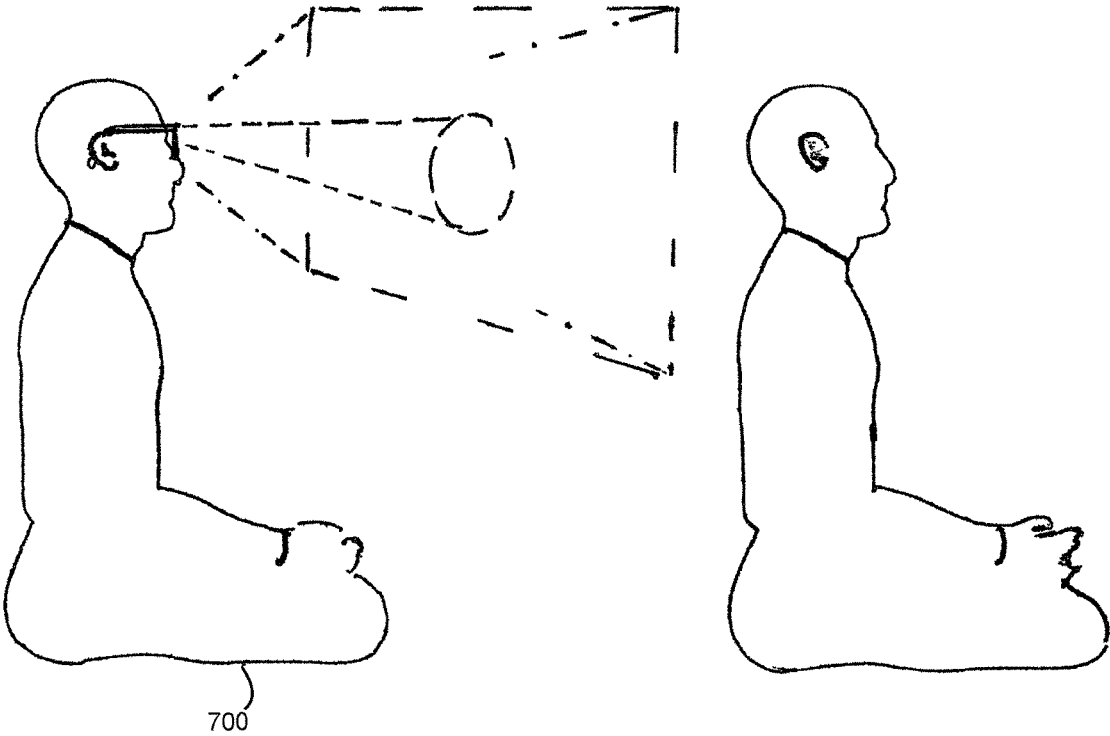


FIG 25

METHOD AND PORTABLE AID FOR MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

REFERENCE TO RELATED CASE

This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 (e) to provisional application No. 62/174,628 filed on Jun. 12, 2015, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Public understanding and acceptance of Mindfulness Meditation has increased considerably in recent years. Its benefits are now recognized in a variety of areas including business, organized sports, public and private schools, colleges, hospitals. Examples include the Department of Veterans Affairs which recommends Mindfulness meditation as a therapeutic tool in treating PTSD, and the Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) movement, which has made strides in treating chronic depression by incorporating Mindfulness with cognitive therapy. Professional sports teams such as the Seattle Seahawks, the Chicago Bulls, and the L.A. Lakers have made Mindfulness a part of their core athlete training programs. School based programs like MindUP in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. train teachers to teach and students to use Mindfulness to be less stressed, more focused and resilient.

“Mindfulness” is a deliberate, observational and non-judgmental approach to consciousness which cultivates moment-by-moment awareness of both thought and perception. The goal is a quiet, focused and undistracted mind. Those who practice it are often better able to understand themselves as well as more clearly perceive, understand, and react effectively with the present and the people in it.

“Mindfulness Meditation” comprises a number of systematic ways of maintaining and deepening the practice of Mindfulness. One of the more common and effective of these is simply sitting, with erect posture in a quiet setting, eyes open and directed forward toward a visually non-distracting background such as a screen or blank wall. Inner concentration on one’s breathing is often recommended, especially for the inexperienced. The inner stream of thoughts is neither repressed nor intently examined, just calmly observed, and over time many of these thoughts and memories, even painful ones, can lose their power to distract from or color perception of the present.

This style of meditation has been practiced for many hundreds of years by adherents of Zen Buddhism as the shortest (but arguably also the most difficult) route to enlightenment. The eyes are kept open and unfocused to combat sleepiness and maintain a sense of the present moment and, where possible, facing a wall, curtain, or the like is recommended to prevent unwanted visual distractions. However, these conditions are not always possible, especially in group meditation or where unoccupied stretches of a wall, screen, or curtain are not available.

In U.S. Pat. No. 3,972,319: Wind Mosaic Glasses, a wearable meditative aid similar to eyeglasses is described wherein the outflowing breath of a user moves a small deflector surface under the nostrils which in turn rotates an outer, geometrical patterned lens relative to an inner and fixed lens having a differing pattern, to create a changing kaleidoscopic or moire’ pattern. The user can thus monitor breathing while viewing entertaining geometrical patterns. Several significant drawback to using this device during mindfulness meditation are that it visually isolates the user

from the user’s actual visual environment, and its visual effects would distract the user from awareness of thoughts, which is perhaps the central tenet of mindfulness meditation.

U.S. Pat. No. 7,188,945: Eyeglass System Having Spinning Bezels, describes eyeglasses having rotatable, removable, and interchangeable circular bezels, which have a variety of geometric to increase the novelty and attractiveness of the glasses. Although the inventor mentions the possibility of other bezel designs having a calming or soothing effect during meditation, this device would have drawbacks similar to those of U.S. Pat. No. 3,972,319.

In U.S. Pat. No. 6,092,906: Personal/Private Light Screen, a largely opaque light screen worn like eyeglasses is presented having a self-contained light source configured to isolate the wearer from ambient light save for a pair of very small closable apertures allowing the wearer to read a closely positioned book or text if so desired. This device is similar to a larger class of such devices intended to counteract Seasonal Affect Disorder (SAD) using intense light sources. Again the drawback of such devices if used during mindfulness meditation is their tendency to overwhelm the ambient external and internal environment.

What is needed then is a portable meditative aid that can be worn in a manner similar to typical eyeglasses and would provide the wearer with a translucent visual region of limited size on which to focus during meditation without blocking the entire visual field.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to an apparatus for at least partially blocking a field of view that includes a first member extending between a first edge and a second edge, the first member having a translucent portion, a first elongated side member attached adjacent the first edge of the first member, and a second elongated side member attached adjacent the second edge of the first member, the first and second elongated members being generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane.

In some embodiments, the first member is comprised of two smaller members, the two smaller members being joined by an arcuate portion adjacent edges thereof that are opposite to the edges attached to the elongated edges.

In some other embodiments, the first member has a transparent portion in addition to the translucent portion.

According to another aspect of the present invention, an apparatus for at least partially blocking a field of view includes a frame, a first member extending between a first edge and a second edge, the first member having a translucent portion and attached to the frame, a first elongated side member attached to the frame, and a second elongated side member attached to the frame, the first and second elongated members being generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane.

It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description of the present embodiments of the invention are intended to provide an overview or framework for understanding the nature and character of the invention as it is claimed. The accompanying drawings are included to provide a further understanding of the invention, and are incorporated into and constitute a part of this specification. The drawings illustrate various embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles and operations of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a front view of the apparatus of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a rear view of the apparatus of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a side view of the apparatus of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a front view of the apparatus of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is a rear view of the apparatus of FIG. 5;

FIG. 8 is a side view of the apparatus of FIG. 5;

FIG. 9 is perspective view of a third embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention;

FIG. 10 is a front view of the apparatus of FIG. 9;

FIG. 11 is a rear view of the apparatus of FIG. 9;

FIG. 12 is a side view of the apparatus of FIG. 9;

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of a fourth embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention;

FIG. 14 is a front view of the apparatus of FIG. 13;

FIG. 15 is a rear view of the apparatus of FIG. 13;

FIG. 16 is a side view of the apparatus of FIG. 13;

FIG. 17 is a perspective view of a fifth embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention.

FIG. 18 is a front view of the apparatus of FIG. 17;

FIG. 19 is a rear view of the apparatus of FIG. 17;

FIG. 20 is a side view of the apparatus of FIG. 17;

FIG. 21 is a front perspective view of a sixth embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention using typical eyeglass frames;

FIG. 22 is a rear perspective view of the apparatus of FIG. 21;

FIG. 23 is a depiction of sitting mindfulness meditation using a wall as a focal zone;

FIG. 24 depicts sitting meditation using the one embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention to create a focal zone; and

FIG. 25 depicts group sitting meditation using the one embodiment of an apparatus for use in mindful meditation according to the present invention to create a focal zone

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Reference will now be made in detail to the present preferred embodiment(s) of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Whenever possible, the same reference numerals will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts.

Referring to FIGS. 1-4 is a first embodiment of an apparatus 100 for at least partially blocking a field of view. The apparatus 100 has a first member 102 extending between a first edge 104 and a second edge 106. The first member 102 has a translucent portion 108, which in FIGS. 1-4 cover the entirety of the first member 102. However, as described below in more detail, the translucent portion 108 may only cover a portion of the first member 102. The apparatus 100 also has a first elongated side member 110 attached adjacent the first edge 104 of the first member 102. The apparatus 100 also has a second elongated side member 112 attached adjacent the second edge 106 of the first member 102. The two elongated side members 110,112

extend rearwardly from the first member 102 and they are generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane A. See FIG. 4. The first member 102 has an outside surface 114 and an opposing, inside surface 116. On the inside surface 116 are attachments 120 adjacent the first edge 104 and the second edge 106 for the two elongated side members 110,112. The attachments 120 preferably include pins or screws 122 to allow for the two elongated side members 110,112 to be attached to the first member 102 in a rotatable manner. However, the elongated side members 110,112 could be fixedly attached to the attachments 120 or even fixedly attached directly to the first member 102.

The first member 102 also includes a rounded bottom edge portion 124, the rounded bottom edge portion 124 could be viewed as a cut-out portion of first member 102 that is configured to engage a bridge of a nose (not illustrated) of a user of the apparatus 100. As will be clear to a user of the apparatus 100, the apparatus 100 generally looks and operates like a pair of glasses in that the two elongated side members 110,112 correspond to the temples and the first member 102 as the front (frame and lenses) of the eye glasses.

The translucent portion 108 can be formed on either the outside surface 114 or on the opposing, inside surface 116. The translucent portion 108 (and those described below) can be formed in a number of ways. For example, the translucent portion 108 can be made by adhering a film to the first member 102, either on the outside surface 114 or on the inside surface 116. The film can be glued to the surfaces or by static cling. Alternatively, the translucent portion 108 can be made either mechanically (for example, by grinding one of the surfaces of the first member 102) or chemically (for example by etching the first member 102).

A second embodiment of an apparatus 200 for at least partially blocking a field of view is illustrated in FIGS. 5-8. The apparatus 200 has a first member 202 that includes two smaller members, a first smaller member 202a and a second smaller member 202b. The first smaller member 202a has an outside edge 204a and an inside edge 204b. The second smaller member 202b has an outside edge 206a and an inside edge 206b.

The first smaller member 202a and the second smaller member 202b each have a translucent portion 208, which in FIGS. 5-8 cover the entirety of the first smaller member 202a and the second smaller member 202b. However, as described below in more detail, the translucent portion 208 may only cover a portion of the first smaller member 202a and the second smaller member 202b.

The apparatus 200 also has a first elongated side member 210 attached adjacent the outside edge 204a of the first smaller member 202a. The apparatus 200 also has a second elongated side member 212 attached adjacent the outside edge 206a of the second smaller member 202b. The two elongated side members 210,212 extending rearwardly from the first smaller member 202a and the second smaller member 202b and they are generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane B. See FIG. 8. The elongated side members 210,212 could have any shape or configuration, not just the shape illustrated in the figures.

The two smaller members 202a and 202b are joined by an arcuate portion 226 that connects to the inside edge 204b of the first smaller member 202a and the inside edge 206b of second smaller member 202b. The arcuate portion 226 has a rounded bottom edge portion that is configured to engage a bridge of a nose (not illustrated) of a user of the apparatus 200. The arcuate portion 226 may be a separate piece (even

made from a different material) or a continuation of (and thus integral with) the two smaller members 202a and 202b.

The first smaller member 202a and a second smaller member 202b both have an outside surface 214 and an opposing, inside surface 216. On the inside surface 216 are attachments 220 adjacent the outside edge 204a and the outside edge 206a for the two elongated side members 210,212. The attachments 220 preferably include pins or screws 222 to allow for the two elongated side members 210,212 to be attached to the first member 102 in a rotatable manner. However, the elongated side members 210,212 could be fixedly attached to the attachments 220 or even fixedly attached directly to the two smaller members 202a and 202b.

A third embodiment of an apparatus 300 for at least partially blocking a field of view is illustrated in FIGS. 9-12. The apparatus 300 has a first member 302 extending between a first edge 304 and a second edge 306. The first member 302 has a translucent portion 308a and two transparent portions 308b, one on either side of the translucent portions 308a. In this configuration, the person using the apparatus 300 may focus on the translucent portion 308a during meditation, and use the transparent portions 308b before and/or after meditating. The transparent portions 308b may also have an optical prescription if so desired. The translucent portion 308a covers about 40 percent of the first member 302, but may cover anywhere from 20 to 70 percent. Additionally, while the translucent portions 308a appear to be of similar size and areas, they may be of different sizes and areas, meaning that the translucent portion 308a would be disposed farther up or down on the first member 302.

The apparatus 300 also has a first elongated side member 310 attached adjacent the first edge 304 of the first member 302. The apparatus 300 also has a second elongated side member 312 attached adjacent the second edge 306 of the first member 302. The two elongated side members 310,312 extend rearwardly from the first member 302 and they are generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane C. See FIG. 12. The elongated side members 310,312 could have any shape or configuration, not just the shape illustrated in the figures.

The first member 302 has an outside surface 314 and an opposing, inside surface 316. On the inside surface 316 are attachments 320 adjacent the first edge 304 and the second edge 306 for the two elongated side members 310,312. The attachments 320 preferably include pins or screws 322 to allow for the two elongated side members 310,312 to be attached to the first member 302 in a rotatable manner. However, the elongated side members 310,312 could be fixedly attached to the attachments 320 or even fixedly attached directly to the first member 302.

The first member 302 also includes a rounded bottom edge portion 324, the rounded bottom edge portion 324 could be viewed as a cut-out portion of first member 302 that is configured to engage a bridge of a nose (not illustrated) of a user of the apparatus 300. As will be clear to a user of the apparatus 300, the apparatus 300 generally looks and operates like a pair of glasses in that the two elongated side members 310,312 correspond to the temples and the first member 302 as the front (frame and lenses) of the eye glasses.

FIGS. 13-16 illustrates a fourth embodiment of an apparatus 400 for at least partially blocking a field of view. The apparatus 400 has a first member 402 that includes two smaller members, a first smaller member 402a and a second smaller member 402b. The first smaller member 402a has an

outside edge 404a and an inside edge 404b. The second smaller member 402b has an outside edge 406a and an inside edge 406b.

Each of the first smaller member 402a and a second smaller member 402b have translucent portion 408a and two transparent portions 408b, one on either side of the translucent portions 408a. In this configuration, the person using the apparatus 400 may focus on the translucent portion 408a during meditation, and use the transparent portions 408b before and/or after meditating. The transparent portions 408b may also have an optical prescription if so desired. The translucent portion 408a covers about 40 percent of the first member 302, but may cover anywhere from 20 to 70 percent. Additionally, while the translucent portions 408a appear to be of similar size and areas, they may be of different sizes and areas, meaning that the translucent portion 408a would move up or down on the first member 402.

The apparatus 400 also has a first elongated side member 410 attached adjacent the outside edge 404a of the first smaller member 402a. The apparatus 400 also has a second elongated side member 412 attached adjacent the outside edge 406a of the second smaller member 402b. The two elongated side members 410,412 extending rearwardly from the first smaller member 202a and the second smaller member 402b and they are generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane D. See FIG. 16. The elongated side members 410,412 could have any shape or configuration, not just the shape illustrated in the figures.

The two smaller members 402a and 402b are joined by an arcuate portion 426 that connects to the inside edge 404b of the first smaller member 402a and the inside edge 406b of second smaller member 402b. The arcuate portion 426 has a rounded bottom edge portion that is configured to engage a bridge of a nose (not illustrated) of a user of the apparatus 400. The arcuate portion 426 may be a separate piece (even made from a different material) or a continuation (and thus integral) of the two smaller members 402a and 402b. As illustrated, the arcuate portion 426 may also have a translucent portion or be transparent.

The first smaller member 402a and a second smaller member 402b both have an outside surface 414 and an opposing, inside surface 416. On the inside surface 416 are attachments 420 adjacent the outside edge 404a and the outside edge 406a for the two elongated side members 410,412. The attachments 420 preferably include pins or screws 422 to allow for the two elongated side members 410,412 to be attached to the first member 402 in a rotatable manner. However, the elongated side members 410,412 could be fixedly attached to the attachments 420 or even fixedly attached directly to the two smaller members 402a and 402b.

Another embodiment of an apparatus 500 for at least partially blocking a field of view is illustrated in FIGS. 17-20. The apparatus 500 has a first member 502 that includes two smaller members, a first smaller member 502a and a second smaller member 502b. The first smaller member 502a has an outside edge 504a, an inside edge 504b, and a top edge 504c. The second smaller member 502b has an outside edge 506a, an inside edge 506b, and a top edge 506c.

The first smaller member 502a and the second smaller member 502b each have a translucent portion 508, which as illustrated in FIGS. 17-19 cover a portion of the first smaller member 502a and the second smaller member 502b. However, the translucent portion 508 may cover the entire surface of the first smaller member 502a and the second smaller member 502b.

The apparatus **500** has a frame **518** to which the first smaller member **502a** and the second smaller member **502b** are attached. The first smaller member **502a** and the second smaller member **502b** are rotatably attached to the frame **518** at the top edge **504c** and top edge **506c**, respectively. The first smaller member **502a** and the second smaller member **502b** have two openings **528** adjacent the top edge **504c**, **506c** to allow a clip or other piece **530** to pass through the openings **528** and around a portion of the frame **518**. Preferably, the clip **530** will be chosen to allow the first smaller member **502a** and the second smaller member **502b** to remain either in an up position, such as illustrated in FIG. **17** by second smaller member **502b**. The first smaller member **502a** and a second smaller member **502b** both have an outside surface **514** and an opposing, inside surface **516**. The translucent portion **508** may be disposed or formed on either the outside surface **514** or the inside surface **516**.

The apparatus **500** also has a first elongated side member **510** attached to the frame **518** adjacent the outside edge **504a** of the first smaller member **502a** (when the first smaller member **502a** is in a down position). The apparatus **500** also has a second elongated side member **512** attached to the frame **518** adjacent the outside edge **506a** of the second smaller member **502b** when it is in the down position. The two elongated side members **510,512** extending rearwardly from the frame **518** and they are generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane E. See FIG. **20**. The elongated side members **510,512** could have any shape or configuration, not just the shape illustrated in the figures.

The frame **518** includes an arcuate portion **526** that connects the two frame portions supporting the first smaller member **502a** and the second smaller member **502b**. The arcuate portion **526** has a rounded bottom edge portion that is configured to engage a bridge of a nose (not illustrated) of a user of the apparatus **500**.

The frame **518** may also include attachments **520** for the two elongated side members **510,512**. The attachments **520** preferably include pins or screws **522** to allow for the two elongated side members **510,512** to be attached to the frame **518** in a rotatable manner. However, the elongated side members **510,512** could be fixedly attached to the frame **518**.

A sixth embodiment of an apparatus **600** for at least partially blocking a field of view is illustrated in FIGS. **21-22**. In this embodiment, a frame **618** of a pair of glasses has a first smaller member **602a** and the second smaller member **602b**. The first smaller member **602a** and the second smaller member **602b** each have a translucent portion **608a**, which as illustrated cover a top portion of the first smaller member **602a** and the second smaller member **602b**. The translucent portion **608a** may also be present on the lower portion (reversed with the transparent portion **608b**) or cover the entire surface of the first smaller member **502a** and the second smaller member **502b** and come within the scope of the present invention. The first smaller member **602a** and a second smaller member **602b** both have an outside surface **614** and an opposing, inside surface **616**. The translucent portion **608a** may be disposed or formed on either the outside surface **614** or the inside surface **616**.

The use of the apparatus according to the present invention will now be explained with reference to FIGS. **23-35**. In FIG. **23**, a person **700** is illustrated focusing on a wall during mindfulness meditation using a wall **702** as a focal zone. However, such a focal zone is not always possible or available to those wanting to engage in mindfulness meditation. Thus, the person **700** is depicted in FIG. **24** as using one embodiment of the apparatus according to the present

invention to create a focal zone **704** without the need to have a blank wall or other appropriate location. As a result, the person **700** can really create a focal zone where ever they may be. And FIG. **25** illustrates the use of the apparatus according to the present invention by person **700** in a group setting.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations can be made to the present invention without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus it is intended that the present invention cover the modifications and variations of this invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.

I claim:

1. An apparatus for at least partially blocking a field of view comprising:

a first member extending between a first edge and a second edge, the first member having a translucent portion extending from the first edge to the second edge and a top edge to a bottom edge to at least partially block the field of view of a user;

a first elongated side member attached adjacent the first edge of the first member; and

a second elongated side member attached adjacent the second edge of the first member, the first and second elongated members being generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane.

2. The apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the first and second elongated side members are rotatably attached to the first member.

3. The apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the first member is comprised of two smaller members, the two smaller members being joined by an arcuate portion adjacent edges thereof that are opposite to the edges attached to the elongated edges.

4. The apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the first member has rounded bottom edge portion, the rounded bottom edge portion configured to engage a bridge of a nose.

5. The apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the first member has an inside surface and an outside surface, one of the inside and the outside surfaces having a surface treatment to make the first member translucent.

6. The apparatus according to claim **5**, wherein the surface treatment includes a material adhered to the first member.

7. The apparatus according to claim **5**, wherein the surface treatment includes a physical or chemical treatment to the first member.

8. An apparatus for at least partially blocking a field of view comprising:

a frame;

a first member extending between a first edge and a second edge, the first member having a translucent portion extending from the first edge to the second edge and a top edge to a bottom edge to at least partially block the field of view of a user and attached to the frame;

a first elongated side member attached to the frame; and
a second elongated side member attached to the frame, the first and second elongated members being generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane.

9. The apparatus according to claim **8**, wherein the first member is comprised of two smaller members, each of the two smaller members being rotatably connected to the frame.

10. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the first member is comprised of two smaller members are completely surrounded by a portion of the frame.

11. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the first member has an inside surface and an outside surface, one of the inside and the outside surfaces having a surface treatment to make the first member translucent. 5

12. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the surface treatment includes a material adhered to the first member. 10

13. The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the surface treatment includes a physical or chemical treatment to the first member.

14. An apparatus for at least partially blocking a field of view comprising: 15

- a first member extending between a first edge and a second edge, the first member having a translucent portion extending between the first and second edges to at least partially block the field of view of a user and is positioned between two transparent portions; 20
- a first elongated side member attached adjacent the first edge of the first member; and
- a second elongated side member attached adjacent the second edge of the first member, the first and second elongated members being generally parallel to another and lying in a single horizontal plane. 25

15. The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the translucent portion covers at least 40% of the first member.

16. The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the first member is comprised of two smaller members, each of the two smaller members being rotatably connected to the frame. 30

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